



Like a researcher who dedicates his or her life to an effort to heal illnesses or discover new stars, I see myself as a researcher. A researcher of the self.

My research deals with consciousness, essence, and the discovery of new ways to reach them. There are countless paths for learning the lessons of life, and I have walked on many of them. Some of them are rocky and hard; some have many traffic lights, and some are like highways. All of these paths have ultimately led me to myself.

Everything that we see around us is, in essence, a reflection of something within us. We can no longer take from one another. We can no longer exploit the Earth's resources and think that there will be no consequences—because if there's no planet, there's no bottom line. I believe that every business integrating true and genuine values, including giving to those in need, will profit in the long run.

Many years ago, I tried to understand what my calling was and arrived each time at the same answer: world peace. To achieve peace in the world, we must achieve peace within ourselves and with our surroundings. Peace begins within.

Today, I believe that I do indeed have a mission in this world, a mission to lead

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and to guide. Not out of vanity and not from political aspiration, but the understanding that I have the tools to bring change to the world. I have the ability to envision this change, to see the vision of the future, to influence people. And that I can use my personal example to show others the way.

Through The Arison Group, I have set up a variety of charitable and sustainable companies. For example, The Essence of Life.org to arouse awareness and provide tools for attaining inner peace. In Hebrew and English, an Internet radio station, workshops, a visitors center designed for both children and adults. I also host Good Deeds Day, in which everyone is called upon to do one good deed for someone else (even giving a genuine smile is a good deed). The next Good Deeds Day will be March 16, 2010, and I truly hope that we can attract an international event.

If we want to see a better world, each one of us must do it. We must make it happen by helping one another. I'm not talking about charity that causes dependency. Rather, it's about providing the kind of help that fosters independence.

It is possible to give back to the community, to inspire the spirit of us through everything we do—personal matters, business, and every aspect of our lives. We all have a stake in our community, and in our own spirits and seeking avenues of generosity is the best way to help among us.

Portions of this article are excerpted from Birth: When the Spiritual and the Material Come Together, by Sharl Arison, Phoenix Books. NewsArison is ranked as one of the world's wealthiest women on the 600 List. Owner of The Arison Group, a conglomerate of global nonprofit organizations, she has created a groundbreaking and humane business model that incorporates integrity, vision and spiritual knowledge to build a better world. Learn more at arison.com or woflife.org.